



QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

November 2009

Boston College

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Preface

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education.

As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

Purpose of IQER

Higher education programmes delivered by further education colleges (colleges) lead to awards made by higher education institutions or Edexcel. The awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for maintaining the academic standards of their awards and assuring the quality of the students' learning opportunities. The purpose of IQER is, therefore, to safeguard the public interest in the academic standards and quality of higher education delivered in colleges. It achieves this by providing objective and independent information about the way in which colleges discharge their responsibilities within the context of their partnership agreements with awarding bodies. IQER focuses on three core themes: academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information.

The IQER process

IQER is a peer review process. It is divided into two complementary stages: Developmental engagement and Summative review. In accordance with the published method, colleges with less than 100 full-time equivalent students funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) may elect not to take part in Developmental engagements, but all HEFCE-funded colleges will take part in Summative review.

Developmental engagement

Developmental engagements explore in an open and collegial way the challenges colleges face in specific areas of higher education provision. Each college's first, and often their only, Developmental engagement focuses on student assessment.

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college
- an optional written submission by the student body
- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit
- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days
- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education
- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

To promote a collegial approach, Developmental engagement teams include up to two members of staff from the further education college under review. They are known as nominees for this process.

Summative review

Summative review addresses all aspects of a college's HEFCE-funded higher education provision and provides judgements on the management and delivery of this provision against core themes one and two, and a conclusion against core theme three.

Summative review shares the main elements of Developmental engagement described above. Summative review teams, however, are composed of the IQER coordinator and QAA reviewers. They do not include nominees.

Evidence

In order to obtain evidence for the review, IQER teams carry out a number of activities, including:

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents
- reviewing the optional written submission from students
- asking questions of relevant staff
- talking to students about their experiences.

IQER teams' expectations of colleges are guided by a nationally agreed set of reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure. These are published by QAA and consist of:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study
- award benchmark statements, which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

In addition, Developmental engagement teams gather evidence by focusing on particular aspects of the theme under review. These are known as 'lines of enquiry'.

Outcomes of IQER

Each Developmental engagement and Summative review results in a written report:

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential**, **advisable** and **desirable**. To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.
- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence**. There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published.

Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding body(ies) as appropriate. The college's action plan in response to the conclusions of the Summative review will be published as part of the report.

Executive summary

The Summative review of Boston College carried out in November 2009

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice** for dissemination:

- the College's excellent links to its awarding bodies, which enhance staff awareness and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure
- the involvement of employers, which makes a valuable contribution to the continuing development of the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care Practice
- the College's virtual learning environment, which is effectively used to support the role of student representatives
- the College enhances the curriculum and student employability by the additional provision of a certificated award in Cisco Systems for students on the BSc (Hons) Computer Systems Engineering.

Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of recommendations for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it would be **advisable** for the College to address the following:

- staff should ensure that they consistently apply the College's policy relating to the late submission of work by students
- personal tutorials should be formally timetabled for all higher education students in line with College policy.

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the College to address the following:

- in view of the College's plans to expand higher education provision, consideration should be given to the creation of a forum where staff teaching on higher education programmes can meet to discuss relevant issues and share good practice
- the College needs to consider ways of improving library facilities, to ensure that they meet the study needs of higher education students.

A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at Boston College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes that the College delivers on behalf of the University of Lincoln, the University of Sunderland and the University of Huddersfield. The review was carried out by Mr Jonathan Doney, Mr Harry Davison (reviewers) and Mr Peter Clarke (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and representatives of partner institutions, and reports from inspections by Ofsted. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*; subject and award benchmark statements; *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications. As the total full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College is less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement. The team concludes that the College would have been better prepared for the Summative review had it undertaken a Developmental engagement.

3 In order to assist HEFCE to gain information to assist with the assessment of the impact of Foundation Degree awards, Section D of this report summarises details of the Foundation Degree programmes delivered at the College.

4 The College is a medium-sized general further education college situated in the market town of Boston, in south-east Lincolnshire. Recruitment is chiefly from south and east Lincolnshire including the Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland districts, and parts of North and South Kesteven. The population of the area is approximately 460,000. The area served is geographically large, rural and sparsely populated. The local employer base comprises predominantly small and medium-sized enterprises. The College's mission is to be 'a learning organisation raising aspirations and meeting the skills needs of individuals, communities and employers through high quality education and training'.

5 The College's rural location, the dispersed nature of its client group, and the distance between the College and alternative providers, present particular challenges in providing accessible and viable provision across the full spectrum of the curriculum. In addition, rural isolation has, historically, had a significant impact on educational aspirations. Lincolnshire performs better than average at GCSE-Level and, at 29 to 32 per cent, has a higher than average rate of higher education participation. However, there are pockets of very low take-up, with fewer than 16 per cent of school leavers continuing to higher education in parts of Gainsborough, Grantham, Lincoln, and in eastern coastal and remote rural areas. There is a net migration of people aged 18 to 24-years leaving the county for higher education and higher skilled jobs and not returning. The College therefore works with the University of Lincoln and other higher education institutions to provide progression routes to higher education, and it is part of the Aimhigher project, which encourages this progression. The College intends to increase its higher education provision to encourage people to study locally.

6 The HEFCE-funded higher education provision consists of the following:

University of Lincoln

- Foundation Degree (FD) in Early Years (years two and three only) (15 part-time students)
- FD in Health and Social Care Practice (60 part-time students)

University of Sunderland

- BSc (Hons) Computer Systems Engineering (25 full-time students)

University of Huddersfield

- Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education (five part-time students)
- Certificate in Education (47 part-time students)
- BA Education and Training (12 part-time students).

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 Arrangements with the University of Lincoln are clearly articulated in the memorandum of agreement. The FD in Early Years was developed by the University. The FD in Health and Social Care Practice was developed by the College, along with the local Primary Care Trust, and was validated by the University. Assessment is carried out by College staff with some input from Trust staff. External examiners are appointed by, and report to, the University.

8 The College is a member of the consortiums for the University of Huddersfield and the University of Sunderland programmes, arrangements for which are clearly set out in the agreements between the College and the Universities. Assessment instruments are produced at the relevant University, following consultation, and are common across each of the consortiums. The Universities appoint external examiners, who report to the relevant University on assessment across each consortium. In the case of the University of Sunderland, all assessment is carried out by University staff; for University of Huddersfield provision, staff at the College mark assessments and this is subject to University moderation processes.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

9 The BA Education and Training validated by the University of Huddersfield commenced in September 2009. Because of poor demand, the BA Applied Social Science and the FD in Early Years validated by the University of Lincoln are no longer offered; however, years two and three of the latter programme were still running at the time of the visit. The FD in Health and Social Care Practice went through a revalidation in 2009, in response to the University's move from 10 to 15 credit modules.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

10 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. Individual students completed a questionnaire designed by the College. The responses were collated for each programme by student representatives and these summaries were provided to the team. During the visit the team met with a group of students representing all courses, except the FD in Health and Social Care Practice. The written submission and the meeting helped to inform the focus of the review.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

How are responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

11 The management structure within the College does not differentiate between further and higher education provision. From a team of five directors who all report directly to the Principal, two have responsibilities relating to higher education. The Director of Curriculum and Standards line manages the Head of Quality and Improvement, and curriculum and programme leaders who cover both higher and further education. The Director of Curriculum and Standards works closely with the Director of Client Services, who has cross-college responsibility for higher education. The College Quality Manual has a higher education section, and this outlines processes relating to validation of programmes and quality assurance. The College produces a Quality Improvement Calendar for the academic year, which is available through the College virtual learning environment.

12 Effective committee and management structures are in place to enable the College to manage the assurance of standards of its higher education programmes on behalf of the awarding bodies. Quality policy and strategy are the responsibility of the Standards Committee, a subgroup of the Corporation. This is then devolved by the Senior Leadership Team to the Curriculum Strategy Group at an operational level. Higher education at the College operates within a further education quality framework with common policies adopted across the higher education provision. Each curriculum area is required to submit a monthly management report, which provides the basis for annual programme monitoring.

13 The College has no quality procedures of its own specifically for higher education provision; those used are required and set by the awarding bodies. As a result of the recent revalidation of the FD in Health and Social Care Practice, a Foundation Degree Steering Group has been formed with College and employer membership. This group has responsibility for monitoring and informing the delivery and curriculum of the FD in Health and Social Care Practice, and is a subcommittee of the Foundation Degree Curriculum Group. Continuing employer involvement in the development of the programme is highly effective in ensuring its currency, and represents good practice.

14 The College has no arrangements in place for staff teaching on higher education programmes in different curriculum areas to meet, to discuss relevant issues and share good practice. Given the College's ambitions to expand its higher education provision, the team considers it desirable that an appropriate forum be established.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15 The College has incorporated the Academic Infrastructure into the management of its programmes. Sections of the *Code of practice* are integrated through existing internal reporting mechanisms and systems into the College's quality policies by the Head of Quality and Improvement. All new staff have a full induction programme covering the College's quality assurance systems, as well as having an appointed mentor who covers this aspect. College staff have access to a Continuing Professional Development Centre on-campus, where information regarding the Academic Infrastructure is freely available

together with information regarding quality assurance. This information is also available through the College's virtual learning environment and intranet service. In discussion, staff demonstrated a good awareness of the Academic Infrastructure. However, staff and students indicated that there had been some inconsistency in the application of the College's policies on late submission of work. The team considers it advisable that the College ensures policies are followed rigorously in future.

16 The University of Lincoln has established an effective process for mapping *Code of practice* precepts to quality procedures, which is disseminated to partner colleges through University committees. The University invites College staff to meetings that discuss any changes to sections of the *Code*, or outcomes from internal and/or external reports which relate to ensuring that account has been taken of the *Code's* precepts. By doing this, the College's staff are kept aware of the importance of the *Code* and its relationship to the Academic Infrastructure. The College's relationship with its awarding bodies and the impact of this on staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure represents good practice.

How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of validating partners and awarding bodies?

17 For most of its higher education provision, the College delivers programmes that have been developed by its university partners, and depending on the partner involved, the amount of involvement with such aspects as assessment varies considerably. Appropriate mechanisms are in place for monitoring programmes. Awarding universities are represented at annual programme reviews, and the outcomes are recorded in the form of an action plan for each curriculum area, which is summarised in the College's self-assessment report.

18 The appointment of external examiners is the responsibility of the relevant university. The College has effective systems in place for dealing with matters raised by external examiners, although reports covering consortia arrangements rarely refer to individual centres. External examiner reports from the University of Lincoln are clearly identified as relating to Boston College. External examiners' reports are submitted initially to the relevant university faculty before being sent to the College's Principal for consideration and response by the Head of Quality and Improvement, in consultation with curriculum staff. Responses are sent to the university faculty, which then replies to the examiner. The report's contents and any matters arising are discussed by the College at monitoring meetings, and the outcomes of these are fed back to the faculty head at the university. Outcomes from reports contribute to the College's continuing professional development plan for staff, and contribute to the self-assessment report.

What are the College's arrangements for staff development to support the achievement of appropriate academic standards?

19 The College has a well-structured staff development programme that includes a cross-college Teaching and Learning Forum, as well as staff development days. As part of its staff development policy, College staff are entitled to five days of professional updating. However, there is no designated research time for those teaching on higher education programmes. College staff have access to, and participate in, staff development activities offered by the partner universities. The College operates an effective induction scheme for new staff.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the management and delivery of the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies.

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

How are responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities for higher education programmes delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

20 Responsibility for the management of higher education provision is summarised above. Programmes are evaluated, using course reviews and monthly management meetings and these inform self-assessment reports. Actions from these are reported back to the Standards Committee. In relation to delivery, the tutors, curriculum leaders and programme leaders make use of the Quality Improvement Calendar timeline. This identifies the organisation of quality assurance activity in respect of each programme. Templates are provided for the relevant documentation used at programme level. There are regular curriculum and team meetings to discuss issues that arise and report into the self-assessment annual quality review.

21 There are systems in place to ensure the effective management of the College's responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities. In addition to the systems and structures outlined above, student feedback and the observation of teaching provide evidence for the management and assurance of teaching quality and the promotion of learning. Student achievement of the stated learning outcomes and performance levels is reported at university level. This is then reported and monitored at College level, through the self-assessment review and ultimately the Standards Committee.

How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding bodies to ensure that students received appropriate learning opportunities?

22 The obligations to the awarding bodies are set out in the agreements the College has for the delivery of their awards. The College programme teams produce an annual report that considers external examiners' reports, student evaluation and achievement. This leads to the production of an action plan. Subsequent monitoring provides an appropriate means for assuring senior managers that obligations are being met.

23 There are effective means, both formal and informal, for ascertaining the views of students regarding the quality of learning opportunities. Students confirmed that the tutorial system has been their main vehicle for raising issues. The College has now instigated a formal system of student representation for each programme. This role is well supported by the College and is viewed favourably by students. External examiners confirm that the College provides appropriate learning opportunities for students.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

24 As stated above, the Academic Infrastructure is well integrated into the management and quality assurance arrangements. The staff delivering higher education programmes are well supported by the awarding bodies in respect of the Academic Infrastructure.

How does the College assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

25 The College uses formal staff appraisal, peer observation of teaching, student feedback and quality assurance processes, including annual programme review, to maintain and enhance quality. Self-assessment with an action plan is a key component of the quality assurance framework.

26 In the case of the Universities of Huddersfield and Sunderland programmes, the Universities are responsible for providing formal written feedback to students on their performance in assessment. Because this inevitably leads to some delays, College staff provide oral feedback. In other cases, written feedback is provided subject to the final decisions of University assessment boards. Students confirmed that College staff provide timely feedback which aids subsequent learning.

27 College staff have formed close relationships with their appropriate industries, and employers are involved in the development of the provision, notably in the FD in Health and Social Care Practice. This ensures that the relevant programmes are fit for purpose and fulfil the needs of industry.

How does the College assure itself that students are supported effectively?

28 The main focus of student support is the course team, with staff able to respond promptly to students' needs because of the small group sizes involved. This was confirmed by the students for both full and part-time programmes. The College provides students with a specific College and programme handbook during induction. Following suggestions from the students, this is now also available on a memory stick. At induction, students are also introduced to the facilities available to them at the awarding universities.

29 Students are directed by tutors to Student Services for learning, financial and career information. The students are aware and appreciate the support that is available to enhance their learning opportunities, and they confirmed a high level of academic guidance and support. Students are invited to offer their opinions on their learning experience and so contribute to the management of quality through a variety of mechanisms, including unit evaluations, student perception surveys and course representatives. Students receive good levels of support from a variety of sources. The College has recently received a national Matrix Award for excellence for Information, Advice and Guidance. Students on the BSc (Hons) Computer Systems Engineering are provided with curricular enhancement in the form of a certificated course on Cisco Systems. This not only enhances the curriculum, but also provides useful skills to improve employability. The team considers this to be good practice.

30 All programmes include provision for personal tutorials. In some cases these are timetabled, but in others they rely on students identifying a need and making arrangements with their tutor. Students and staff confirmed that this leads to inconsistency, with some students failing to take up this opportunity. The team considers it advisable that formal timetabled personal tutorials should be built into all higher education programmes, in line with the College's tutorial policy.

What are the College's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

31 In the higher education strategy document, the College recognises the importance of staff development within the higher education experience. Staff development needs are identified from various sources, including individual appraisal, teaching observations and developments in procedures, and these feed into an individual staff development programme. The staff are positive about the staff development opportunities available to them.

32 The College provides training and support to employer-based mentors. This enables them to provide valuable guidance to students. They also make a useful contribution to the formative assessment of students.

How does the College ensure the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources the students need to achieve the intended learning outcomes for their programmes?

33 Higher and further education students share many of the same resources and facilities. The library is open until early evening, but not weekends. Students can telephone for reservations. The College is responsible for the purchase of books, periodicals and journals. There are reciprocal lending agreements with the partner university libraries. Students also have access to the universities' online systems. While the book lists for programmes are extensive and thorough, the availability of key texts at the College is limited. In addition, the library does not provide a good private study environment for higher education students. The team considers it desirable that the College give consideration to the provision of improved library facilities for higher education students, particularly in view of the plans for expansion. As part of its service to higher education students, the library will access the British Library, to obtain copies of journal papers. There are no links to abstract sites through the College library services.

34 The College provides access to a range of relevant learning resources, including specialist computing hardware and software. BSc (Hons) Computer Systems Engineering students have exclusive access to some computing facilities. Much higher education teaching takes place in well-appointed classrooms, separate from the main College buildings. Induction to learning resources is appropriate. In the case of University of Sunderland students, an intensive two-day visit to the University is organised and delivered by University staff, who explain research methods and library use.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities, as required by the awarding bodies, to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Core theme 3: Public information

What information is the College responsible for publishing about its HEFCE-funded higher education?

35 The College publishes an annual prospectus in which it includes its higher education provision. This outlines the programmes of study and requirements for entry. The website provides comprehensive information on student support, links with employers, admissions processes and financial support. Programme specifications are published and are available to both staff and students. Appropriate mechanisms ensure that the documents conform to

the templates provided by the validating universities. The College mission statement appears on all published literature. The mission statement does not make specific reference to higher education; however, the College views the provision of higher education as a vital component of its mission.

36 Course and programme handbooks are provided by the validating institution and, in some cases, these are available on a memory stick. The virtual learning environment for each course also has a link to the validating institution programme website, where course materials can be accessed. The awarding bodies collaborate with the College over the content of handbooks. In the case of the programmes awarded by the Universities of Sunderland and Huddersfield, the College has little input into the handbooks, but issues some additional contextual information agreed with the relevant institution. In the case of the FD in Health and Social Care Practice, the College is responsible for much material, which it produces according to the University's template. Students commented that they found the handbooks, in all their forms, consistent and very helpful.

37 The College's marketing department develops the marketing strategy. This is informed by the higher education strategy and self-assessment report. Recent campaigns have effectively responded to identified downturns in recruitment.

What arrangements does the College have in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing? How does the College know that these arrangements are effective?

38 Information is produced through a variety of media. This includes radio, newspaper advertising, booklets, posters and flyers. The College marketing department has put in place mechanisms for ensuring the completeness and accuracy of the information produced. Any information is checked and reviewed by the course team and the validating institution. Promotional material contains the names of the awarding bodies for the various programmes. All course handbooks are submitted to the marketing manager for checking. This ensures a consistent standard across the College. Once checked, they are then sent to the validating institution for approval prior to release.

39 Students confirm that they find the handbooks useful and appreciate tutors going through the information with them upon commencement of the programme. The College makes effective use of its virtual learning environment. For example, the College has developed an area within the virtual learning environment to support both tutors and students in relation to the role and function of a course representative. The team considers this to be an example of good practice.

The team considers that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

40 As the total full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College is less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement.

D Foundation Degrees

41 The College delivers two Foundation Degrees awarded by the University of Lincoln. The three-year part-time FD in Early Years has not recruited strongly and is being phased out, with only the second and third years running at the time of the review. The FD in Health and Social Care Practice was developed, and is run, in conjunction with the local Primary Care Trust. It has recruited strongly in response to developments in the role of Assistant Practitioner. The programme is of two years' duration and all students are in full-time employment and classified as part-time.

42 The team identified the following areas of **good practice**:

- the valuable contribution to the continuing development of the FD in Health and Social Care Practice made by employers (paragraphs 13, 27)
- the College's excellent links to its awarding bodies which enhance staff awareness and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 16).

43 The team identified the following area where the College is **advised** to take action:

- personal tutorials should be formally timetabled for all higher education students in line with College policy (paragraph 30).

44 The team identified the following areas where it would be **desirable** for the College to take action:

- in view of the College's plans to expand higher education provision, consideration should be given to the creation of a forum where staff teaching on higher education programmes can meet to discuss relevant issues and share good practice (paragraph 14)
- the College needs to consider ways of improving library facilities to ensure that they meet the study needs of higher education students (paragraph 33).

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

45 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in the College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students, and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, the University of Lincoln, the University of Sunderland and the University of Huddersfield.

46 In the course of the review, the team identified the following areas of **good practice**:

- the valuable contribution to the continuing development of the FD in Health and Social Care Practice made by employers (paragraphs 13, 27)
- the College's excellent links to its awarding bodies, which enhance staff awareness and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 16)
- the enhancement of the curriculum and student employability by the additional provision of a certificated award in Cisco Systems for students on the BSc (Hons) Computer Systems Engineering (paragraph 29)

- the effective use of the College's virtual learning environment to support the role of student representatives (paragraph 39).

47 The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies.

The team agreed a number of areas where the College is **advised** to take action:

- staff should ensure that they consistently apply the policy relating to the late submission of work by students (paragraph 15)
- personal tutorials should be formally timetabled for all higher education students, in line with College policy (paragraph 30).

The team also agreed the following areas where it would be **desirable** for the College to take action:

- in view of the College's plans to expand higher education provision, consideration should be given to the creation of a forum where staff teaching on higher education programmes can meet to discuss relevant issues and share good practice (paragraph 14)
- the College needs to consider ways of improving library facilities, to ensure that they meet the study needs of higher education students (paragraph 33).

48 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreements, for the management of the standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

49 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreements, for the management of the quality of learning opportunities to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

50 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Boston College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the valuable contribution to the continuing development of the FD in Health and Social Care Practice made by employers (paragraphs 13, 27) 	<p>Good practice will be disseminated via the newly formed HE Practitioner Forum. The forum will meet formerly twice termly.</p> <p>Dissemination of good practice will also be encouraged via a dedicated area on the College VLE to create a blog and in effect an on-line forum</p>	February 2010	Director of Client Services	Understanding of and sharing of identified good practice across the curriculum	Curriculum Strategy Group	Annual monitoring returns to HEI partners

Boston College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009							
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College's excellent links to its awarding bodies, which enhance staff awareness and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 16) 	As above	February 2010	Director of Client Services	Understanding of and sharing of identified good practice across the curriculum	Curriculum Strategy Group	Annual monitoring returns to HEI partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the enhancement of the curriculum and student employability by the additional provision of a certificated award in Cisco Systems for students on the BSc (Hons) Computing Systems Engineering (paragraph 29) 	As above As above	February 2010	Director of Client Services	Understanding of and sharing of identified good practice across the curriculum	Curriculum Strategy Group	Annual monitoring returns to HEI partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective use of the College's virtual learning environment to support the role of student representatives (paragraph 39). 		February 2010	Director of Client Services	Understanding of and sharing of identified good practice across the curriculum	Curriculum Strategy Group	Annual monitoring returns to HEI partners	

Boston College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009							
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be advised to take action:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff should ensure that they consistently apply the policy relating to the late submission of work by students (paragraph 15) 	Staff development will be provided for curriculum teams and compliance will be monitored via course co-ordinators and as a standing agenda item on the newly formed HE Practitioner Forum.	March 2010	Director of Client Services	Compliance by all staff to College policy	Curriculum Strategy Group	Annual monitoring returns to HEI partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal tutorials should be formally timetabled for all higher education students, in line with College policy (paragraph 30). 	As above	March 2010	Director of Client Services	Compliance by all staff to College policy	Curriculum Strategy Group	Annual monitoring returns to HEI partners	

Boston College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009							
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
The team agreed the following areas where it would be desirable to take action:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in view of the College's plans to expand higher education provision, consideration should be given to the creation of a forum where staff teaching on higher education programmes can meet to discuss relevant issues and share good practice (paragraph 14) 	A new HE Practitioner Forum will be established specifically for this purpose. The forum will meet formerly twice termly.	February 2010	Director of Client Services	Formal minutes of meetings	Curriculum Strategy Group	Annual monitoring returns to HEI partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College needs to consider ways of improving library facilities, to ensure that they meet the study needs of higher education students (paragraph 33). 	Two rooms have been allocated for quiet study, each for half of the week, with immediate effect.	September 2010	Director of Client Services	Feedback from student satisfaction surveys	Curriculum Strategy Group	Annual monitoring returns to HEI partners	

Boston College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	From September 2010, one dedicated room adjacent to the Learning Resource Centre, will be allocated full-time for this purpose.					

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk

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